

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000029

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
EB/IFD  
WHA/EPSC  
INR/IAA/MAC  
S/CRS  
TREASURY FOR JEFFREY LEVINE  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR  
USDOC FOR 4322/ITA/MAN/WH/OLAC (SMITH, S.)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [EFIN](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITIAN PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERS CALL FOR GENERAL STRIKE DUE TO RISING INSECURITY

1. (U) This cable is Sensitive but Unclassified.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Leaders of the Haitian business community told Charge that they would call a general strike for Monday, January 9 to protest MINUSTAH's ineffectiveness in countering the recent upswing of violence and kidnappings. Representatives will also meet with UNSRSG Juan Gabriel Valdez to pressure him to take action against the criminal gangs. They also pleaded with the Charge for more ammunition for the police. Charge told the group to be ready to assist Cite Soleil immediately after a MINUSTAH operation, if it were to take place, and countered that the problem of the police was not a lack of ammunition, but a lack of skills and training. Clearly, the private sector is worried about the recent upsurge in violence. END SUMMARY.

Private Sector Reps Meet with Charge

3. (SBU) Charge met January 4, at their request, with leaders of the Haitian business community to discuss the recent deterioration of the security situation in Port-au-Prince. Representing the private sector were Reginald Boulos, President of the Haitian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rene-Max Auguste, President of the American Chamber of Commerce, Gladys Coupet, President of the bankers association, and Carl Auguste Boisson, President of the petroleum distributors association.

General Strike to Protest MINUSTAH Ineffectiveness

4. (SBU) Reggie Boulos informed the Charge that the leaders of the private sector would call for a general strike on Monday January 9 to protest MINUSTAH's ineffectiveness in countering the recent upswing of violence and kidnappings. Boulos emphasized that the strike was not aimed at the international donor community in general, but at MINUSTAH specifically. The strike will be a one-day warning strike. If the situation does not improve further strikes of an indeterminate length of time will be forthcoming.

Pressure on Valdes to Take Action

5. (SBU) Representatives of the private sector will also meet one-on-one with UNSRSG Juan Gabriel Valdez to pressure him personally to take action against the criminal gangs in Cite Soleil. Boulos argued that MINUSTAH could take back the slum if it were to work systematically, section by section, in securing the area. Immediately after MINUSTAH secured Cite Soleil, Boulos said that he and other groups were prepared to go in immediately with social programs and social spending. NOTE: Boulos has been active in providing social programs in Cite Soleil for many years. END NOTE.

6. (SBU) The Charge cautioned that such an operation would inevitably cause unintended civilian casualties given the crowded conditions and flimsy construction of tightly packed housing in Cite Soleil. Therefore, the private sector associations must be willing to quickly assist in the aftermath of such an operation, including providing financial support to families of potential victims. Boulos agreed.

The Police Need Ammo

7. (SBU) The group also pleaded with the Charge for the USG to provide ammunition to the police. Boulos and Auguste said that the police had told them that they were unable to mount operations against the criminal gangs because of a lack of ammunition. Boulos began reading off a specific list of needed ammunition, but Charge pointed out that it was not a question of lack of ammunition, but a lack of training of the police officers. Without proper training the HNP could not effectively use additional ammunition, and in any event ammunition was readily available in the Dominican Republic.

Boulos and Auguste conceded the point.

18. (SBU) COMMENT: The deteriorating security situation in the capital has the private sector worried. On top of the political and personal impact of the kidnappings and violence, the situation will start to have an economic impact if employees and customers stay at home and businesses start to close their doors. As if to drive home the point, during the meeting automatic weapons fire could clearly be heard in the background as the private sector representatives made their concerns known. The Embassy EAC decided that the Embassy will remain open on Monday with liberal leave, giving local employees the ability to decide to stay home. END COMMENT.

CARNEY